

Non Invasive Ventilation (NIV) is a way of helping you breathe using a machine attached to a tight fitting mask that you wear over your face. It is not the same as a nebuliser which you might have used before and delivers a medication to the lungs. It is used usually when you are having a severe flare-up of your breathing problem.



- At this time your breathing gets hard work and your muscles can become tired.
- This sometimes leads to a build-up of waste gas (carbon dioxide) and not enough oxygen getting into your blood.

- NIV supports your breathing to give your muscles a rest and allow them time to recover.
- It doesn't breathe for you, but gently assists each breath that you take.
- This can help to get your oxygen and carbon dioxide levels back to normal.



In the past a machine to help breathing needed to be connected to a tube placed inside the windpipe of the patient and had to be done in the intensive care unit. Instead using this new type of ventilator you will need to wear a facemask, which fits firmly but not too tightly.

As you take a breath in you will feel a flow of air from the machine, then as you breathe out there will be a little resistance to help keep your lungs open.

It can feel a bit strange to start with, however most people find that they get used to it fairly easily.



The physiotherapist or nurse will set the machine up and make sure that it is as comfortable for you as possible.

- The nursing staff will check on you frequently so if you do find it uncomfortable they can help.

- You will have your buzzer near by to call for help at any time.

To start with, you need to wear the mask as much as possible for the first 24 hours. It can be removed for short periods to enable you to eat and drink as normal and for your medicines and nebulisers.

To monitor your progress, a peg-like probe will be placed on your finger to measure the oxygen level in the blood.



Also a blood test will need to be taken after the first hour to check that your oxygen and carbon dioxide levels are getting better.

Your normal treatments for your breathing condition, such as nebulisers, antibiotics and steroids will continue alongside using the NIV.

- Generally people need to stay on NIV for a few days, but everybody is different.
- After the first 24 hours you will usually be asked wear it for 2 hours in the morning and afternoon as well as overnight and then we will cut it down to overnight only.
- Your doctor will discuss your treatment with you. The length of time you need it will depend on how quickly the oxygen and carbon dioxide levels in your blood improve.

If you have any further questions please do not hesitate to ask any of the people involved in your care and they will be happy to help.



NIV: The Treatment Explained

A document planned for our patients as a result of patient consultation, support and action.